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Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., delivered his State of the District address Friday at Rio Salado College in Tempe, speaking to constituents about the upcoming challenges facing Washington lawmakers this year, like bipartisanship, the economy and health care.

Mitchell said legislators are upset over how little they accomplished in 2009.

"Everybody's frustrated," he said. "Democrats are frustrated because they feel they can't get anything done. Republicans are frustrated because they're the minority and they can't get what they want done. Independents are angry and frustrated, because the changes they expected to see did not happen after the last election."

The congressman accused both parties of "bickering" and having a "lack of civility."

"This year is a year I think elected leaders have got to get their priorities straight," he said.

Reiterating President Barack Obama's message to Congress Wednesday, Mitchell said the most important issue lawmakers face is the economy and job creation.

"Recent indicators have shown that our economy is turning around ... but for many small businesses and unemployed workers, it's not enough," he said, adding that helping small businesses is "crucial for the recovery."

Small businesses, which make up 73 percent of businesses in Arizona, are the largest source for jobs, he said.

"What these [entrepreneurs] need most is an opportunity and an opening," Mitchell said.

The congressman said last year's economic recovery act included more than \$1 billion to help small businesses, and the economy's recent growth can be partially attributed to this help.

"In order for the economy to recover fully, we have to create jobs," he said. "The federal government can't create jobs - it can help create an environment in which small businesses can succeed and thrive."

On the issue of health care, Mitchell said he is concerned about how many citizens have been denied coverage for pre-existing conditions and how small business owners are suffering because of rising premiums.

Mitchell said one reason he voted in favor of the House health care bill was because it was a step forward in fixing the nation's health care problems.

"The political way out - the easy way out - would have been to vote no," he said.

Mitchell said he would continue reaching across the aisle in order to help solve the nation's problems.

"We're trying to get things done, regardless of politics," he said.

Tempe resident Pat Thielen, a Republican, said she supports Mitchell because he doesn't let party affiliation get in the way.

"He never gives a political partisan speech," she said. "He gives a speech about what's going on, what needs to be done, what he's doing to address the issues and what he feels like we need to do to help him."

Mitchell ended his address saying the state's economic recovery won't happen over night.

"Arizona's 5th Congressional District is home to the best and the brightest that our state has to offer," he said. "Together, we'll lead our state out of this downturn."

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